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## JOHN LOFTON'S JOURNAL

*NBC's strange link  
with Philip Agee*

It's a very strange tale involving NBC News, a researcher on Latin America and the researcher's former ties to ex-CIA agent Philip Agee, who is considered a traitor by many people.

On Nov. 9, 1983, Reed Irvine, chairman of Accuracy In Media, wrote a letter to Reuven Frank, president of NBC News, in which he alleged that a number of errors were contained in an NBC News Guide titled "Central America In Turmoil" — a guide which has been mailed to almost 200,000 people who requested it. In his letter, Mr. Irvine also expressed his concern that one Nicole Szulc was listed as "researcher" for this Guide. The reason for Mr. Irvine's concern:



Ms. Szulc once collaborated on a book with Mr. Agee.

In a letter dated Dec. 23, 1983 — in response to Mr. Irvine's letter to Mr. Frank — Stephen Stander, the managing general attorney in NBC's law department, declared, in part: "While we have absolutely no reason to question the integrity of Ms. Szulc's work, she did not participate in the preparation of the guide."

But, this is not true, according to Ms. Szulc. In an interview, she tells me she did "a little of everything" on the NBC Guide including "research on getting a lot of stats together and putting them in story form." Furthermore, she says she does field-research and "all research for Latin America for NBC News."

Is it true that she once did research for Mr. Agee on one of his books? Yes, it is, says Ms. Szulc, who says she did this because at the time she felt Mr. Agee was doing "an important job." She declines to say who the "mutual friends" were who introduced her to Mr. Agee.

Me: A lot of people think Mr. Agee is a traitor. Do you?

Ms. Szulc: "No."

Me: How would you characterize him?

Ms. Szulc: "What is this for?"

Me: I reiterate that I am doing a story about the NBC Guide, her role in compiling it and her Agee connection.

Once again, Ms. Szulc says that at the time she worked with Mr. Agee she felt he was "doing a job that needed to be done."

Me: You think exposing our active CIA agents around the world was a job that needed to be done?

Ms. Szulc: "At the time, I think it was, yeah." She now says she has no opinion on Mr. Agee.

Me: Even if this exposure endangered the lives of these agents?

Ms. Szulc: "I don't think it did endanger their lives." She says she thinks CIA agents are doing a job "they shouldn't be hiding."

Me: Really? You don't understand why the names of active CIA agents must be kept secret?

Ms. Szulc: "Oh, I understand. I just don't agree."

She says she doesn't agree with covert activities "at all."

Me: At all?

Ms. Szulc: "I think that if our government's activities abroad are bona fide there is no reason to hide them."

Me: But, if these activities are revealed they are, of course, also revealed to the enemy, aren't they?

Ms. Szulc: She says she doesn't believe the Soviets learned anything from Mr. Agee they didn't already know.

Me: Do you believe the Soviets are our enemy?

Ms. Szulc: "I don't believe in enemies. I don't like the term. It's a misnomer."

Well, now. Just exactly what were the jobs Mr. Agee was engaged in, the kind of things Nicole Szulc says were "important" and "needed to be done"? In a 1974 news conference in London, Mr. Agee announced a campaign "to expose CIA officers and agents and to take the measures necessary to drive them out of the countries where they are operating; and to seek within the U.S. to have the CIA abolished."

In a series of actions from 1974 to 1978 and in two books published during this period, Mr. Agee identified hundreds of persons as CIA personnel. In July 1974, two days after a Jamaica press conference at which Mr. Agee's principal collaborator identified Richard Kineman as CIA chief of station in that country, Mr. Kineman's house was hit by automatic weapons gunfire. And in January 1981, two American officials of the American Institute for Free Labor Development — previously identified as a CIA front by Mr. Agee — were assassinated in El Salvador.

In addition, government affidavits show that Mr. Agee made contact with the terrorists holding our hostages in Iran, urged them to demand certain CIA documents and he offered to travel to Iran to analyze these documents. Also, the CIA deputy director for operations has sworn that Mr. Agee's exposure of CIA personnel has prejudiced the ability of the United States to obtain intelligence.

And finally, in a 1981 ruling upholding the secretary of state's revoking of Mr. Agee's passport because his activities "are causing or are likely to cause serious damage to the national security or the foreign policy of the United States," a majority of the U.S. Supreme Court declared:

"Not only has Agee jeopardized the security of the United States, but he has endangered the interests of countries other than the United States — thereby creating serious problems for American foreign relations and foreign policy. Restricting Agee's foreign travel, although perhaps not certain to prevent all of Agee's harmful activities, is the only avenue open to the government to limit these activities."

So, there you have it — just a few examples of the kind of jobs Philip Agee has engaged in, the kind of jobs Nicole Szulc says were "important" and "needed to be done."

I'm sorry, Mr. Stander, but on the basis of her past association with Mr. Agee and her present views, I would say there is every reason to question the integrity of Ms. Szulc's work.

Footnote: After talking with Ms. Szulc, Stephen Stander tells me that she denied telling me what I told him she had told me regarding her role in compiling the NBC Guide.